DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 048 981 24 RC 005 223

AUTHOR	Heathman, James E.
TITLE	The Volunteer--An Educational Resource.
INSTITUTION	New Mexico State Univ., University Park. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO	BR-6-2469
PUB DATE	Feb 71
CONTRACT	OEC-1-6-062469-1574
NOTE	9p.; Discussion paper prepared for Public Schools for Cooperative Research (PSCR) Superintendent's Conference, University of Tennessee, April 5-7, 1971
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Community Involvement, Educational Improvement, *Enrichment Activities, *Human Resources, *Program Descriptions, *School Aides, Staff Utilization, *Volunteers

ABSTRACT

The use of volunteer workers in the school system is an educational improvement at low cost. Volunteers should be used on a regularly scheduled basis for specific duties and projects, depending on school needs and the availability and capabilities of the volunteer. The purposes of a volunteer program are to increase student motivation, to assist the teacher in providing a more enriched and individualized course of instruction, and to strengthen school-community relations by providing an opportunity for community participation in the educational program. In addition to non-working mothers, senior citizens and university students are very effective as volunteers, not only as teaching assistants but as role models for disadvantaged children. In the paper, specific volunteer programs are described; also presented are suggestions for teachers working with volunteers and possible activities with which a volunteer might assist. (JH)

ED048981

THE VOLUNTEER--AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

(Prepared for a conference on Appalachia to be held at the University of Tennessee in April of 1971)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

by

James E. Heathman

Research Associate

February 1971

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL EDUCATION AND SMALL SCHOOLS (CRESS)

New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant with the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

This document may be duplicated in whole or in part, whenever such duplication is in the interest of bettering education.

RC005223

THE VOLUNTEER--AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

The usual obstacle to improvement of the educational program in small rural districts is a lack of financial resources; therefore, a worthwhile educational innovation that does not cost money is likely to be adopted. Such is the case of the volunteer worker in the school system.

The use of volunteers does not imply a complete absence of financial expenditure since administrative time must be spent for planning, recruiting, selection, training, and scheduling. However, with a well-organized volunteer program, these minimal costs may be offset by the reduced need for additional teachers or office workers.

To be effective, the volunteer worker should donate his time and talents on a regularly scheduled basis for specific duties or projects. The services he provides will necessarily be dependent upon the needs of the individual school and upon the availability and capabilities of the school volunteer. The following list from a publication by the Los Angeles City Schools (1) suggests possible activities with which a volunteer might assist:

SERVICES REQUIRING MINIMAL SKILLS OR TRAINING

--assisting in decorating rooms
--assisting with classroom chores
--distributing books and supplies
--helping in the preparation of instructional materials
--arranging and helping to supervise class trips
--grading of objective-type tests
--recording marks
--putting work on the board
--obtaining designated materials for class units

SERVICES REQUIRING AVERAGE SKILLS OR TRAINING

--compiling a picture file for use in class units
--cataloging magazine and newspaper articles pertaining to class units
--setting up simple science experiments
--typing needed teaching materials
--keeping chemicals in order in laboratory and helping in science classes
--helping with arts and crafts, music, physical education, dancing

--organizing and supervising a classroom library
--arranging special holiday programs
--acting as interpreters for non-English speaking parents
--making posters
--setting up hall display cases
--clerical chores - alphabetizing, filing, typing, duplicating materials
--assisting in health programs: innoculations [sic], vision test, first aid, referrals to dental clinics, etc.
--helping with inventories of books and supplies
--assisting the school nurse
--preparing instructional materials requested by staff
--assisting with library operation during the school day, during the lunch hour, before and after school.

SERVICES REQUIRING SPECIAL SKILLS OR TRAINING

--assisting in dramatics, directing, staging, making costumes and scenery, coaching
--assisting in school club activities and co-curricular programs
--assisting in school-wide programs: music, art, dance
--assisting in assembly programs
--assisting in noon programs
--help to improve pupil attendance
--help to orientate new teachers to the community
--assist with homeroom programs and activities
--assist with open house programs and other special event programs
--help to orientate new students to the school
--assist with career guidance programs
--assist with motivation programs to encourage pupils to continue their education
--assist in the scholarship office
--serving on various advisory committees
--assisting with programs for financial assistance to needy students
--assisting with programs relating to cultural patterns and intercultural relations
--assisting in tutoring individual students.

A volunteer program is similar to a teaching aide program, and the two often supplement each other quite effectively. Because he is unpaid, the volunteer usually is not subject to the obligations and discipline which apply to teachers and teaching aides. His shortened schedule and the types of duties expected of him may also prevent his developing as close a working relationship with teachers and administrators as can

the paid teaching aide. The purposes of a school volunteer program, as with a teaching aide program, are to increase student motivation and to assist the teacher in providing a more enriched and individualized course of instruction. In addition, the school volunteer program strengthens school-community relations by providing an opportunity for effective community participation in the educational program.

Qualifications for school volunteers may vary, depending upon the duties they will perform or the services they will provide. The following are listed by the Los Angeles City Schools (2) as qualifications necessary for employment in their school volunteer program:

A. A deep dedication to fulfill all the obligations of the position.
B. Positive attitude, interest, and enthusiasm to work with children.
C. Ability to work cooperatively with school personnel.
D. Adequate communication skills.
E. Good health and moral character.
F. Flexibility of skills.
G. Regularity of attendance.

According to Shalen (3), a volunteer with the New York City Schools must have a high school diploma and "the ability to widen her pupils' horizons because of college education, work experience, travel interests or special talents." Personal character and medical references are also required.

The school volunteer program can be developed only to the extent that volunteers with needed talents are available. The School Volunteer Program in New York City was organized to provide assistants for teachers requesting them. Duties varied with the needs of the individual teacher and included such tasks as correcting papers, drilling and testing children, or assisting with special projects and field trips. A growing emphasis with the New York City program is to use special talents and backgrounds of the volunteers for enrichment purposes. This may involve lectures or demonstrations to groups of children or tutorial help for individual students with reading or language deficiencies.

Three types of activities involving volunteers in the New York City Schools were discussed by Shalen (4). The Reading Help Program is for students in the second through eleventh grades who are reading below grade level. Volunteers, after four special reading training sessions and an apprenticeship, meet individually with assigned students for 45-minute periods twice a week.

The Conversational English Program helps non-English-speaking children develop a basic understanding and speaking ability so that the children can function in a regular classroom. Volunteers work with groups of two for 30-minute periods twice a week after attending a five-session training course emphasizing the concepts of English as a Second Language.

Individualized services performed by volunteers in the New York City Schools include plays and drama workshops directed by an ex-Broadway producer, science clubs sponsored by former science teachers, and production of a school magazine with the assistance of a former editor. Other volunteers have developed and displayed special cultural exhibits, assisted with art or music instruction, and established school libraries.

Provus et al. (5) noted that a university is a potentially valuable source of volunteers who, because of their education and training, are especially qualified to assist with instruction in specific subject matter. A West Coast city has a program of more than 300 school volunteers, 200 of whom are university students. In addition to assistance with classroom instruction, volunteers have established homework centers (where students receive individual help in various subjects), low-cost paperback bookstores, noontime concerts, and extracurricular student clubs.

Senior citizens comprise a very effective volunteer resource. Many have an abundance of time and would appreciate the opportunity to use their talents, particularly for the benefit of children and youth. As reported by Provus et al. (6), a midwestern industrial city with a volunteer program consisting of nearly 1,500 lay citizens has discovered that "retired people often miss practicing their work skills as much as children are frustrated by the lack of them." In that program, retired

machinists demonstrate metal-working techniques in school metal shops, an expert on forestry conducts field excursions and lectures about trees, and a retired labor arbitrator participates in role-playing with students to illustrate techniques and mechanics of collective bargaining.

The Los Angeles City Schools (7) have identified the teacher as the key to the success of a school volunteer program and have offered suggestions for teachers working with volunteer help:

> 1. Try to arrange an informal session with the volunteer at an early date to discuss the program, and what to expect of the children. Orientate the volunteer in the kind of help you would like from her. Try to have a little variety in the tasks assigned, but use her services in any way that will be of help to you and the children. The school volunteer should be trained to assist in an ever increasing variety of activities.
>
> 2. Plan the work you want the volunteer to do before she comes to your room. Create early opportunities for volunteer contacts with individual children. Be specific in your directions.
>
> 3. If you are not going to need your volunteer at her regular time, or if you are going to be away from school, advise the School Volunteer Chairman in advance so that arrangements can be made to utilize her elsewhere.
>
> 4. If you do not need your volunteer for the full time, release her so that she can help another teacher.
>
> 5. Brief your School Volunteer in fire drill and dismissal procedures. Introduce her to the teacher next door.
>
> 6. Anticipate information volunteers will need to carry out assigned duties. Show them where to find materials, how to set up an activity, what books to use with a group, etc. Tell them what limits to set, what special needs....
>
> 7. Avoid assigning responsibilities beyond a volunteer's ability. Do not leave a volunteer with too many children or too large an area to supervise.
>
> 8. Provide increasing responsibility as volunteers are ready.
>
> 9. Expect volunteers to be businesslike about attendance; being on time, staying with assigned responsibilities, and constantly accepting direction from the teacher. Although the job is a volunteer one, the commitment is professional.

Another use for volunteers is just to be around to play and talk with children with no emphasis on teaching. Many children of poverty are not accustomed to a normal home environment created by a self-supporting

male adult. Volunteers become role models whose behavior and attitudes will hopefully influence the children with whom they come in contact. According to Provus et al. (8), a preschool project in one city recruited volunteer fathers for storytelling and conversation. Another school system has a project involving volunteers who are employed men to act as counselors, tutors, and companions for elementary and high school students to improve student occupational attitudes and aspirations.

The Minneapolis Public Schools (9) cooperated with a YMCA- and YWCA-sponsored youth project where University of Minnesota student volunteers participate with disadvantaged children on a one-to-one basis in home, neighborhood, and school-related activities. The schools select children for the project and secure approval from parents. Each volunteer is assigned to a child of like sex. The volunteer maintains a relationship with the child's teacher so that out-of-school experiences can be reinforced by the teacher. Goals of the project are.

For the pupil (the child):

1. To support and reinforce what children are learning in the classroom through additional reading and experiences.
2. To assist children in enlarging their horizons, their interest in experiences beyond those with which they are accustomed.
3. To provide children with persons with whom they can identify and who represent to them models of adult experience which are perhaps absent in their homes for the most part.
4. To give children some needed support and personal attention which is relatively even and consistent.
5. To help the child reach out toward goals which will assist him in perservering [sic] in the needed educational experience.

For the college student (the volunteer):

6. To give the college student volunteer an opportunity of expressing and channeling his social concern in a helpful way.
7. To help acquaint and alert some of our educated youth to the complex problems and needs of culturally deprived areas.
8. To assist the student volunteer through the process of supervision to greater self-awareness of the helping process and the ways he as an individual can be most helpful to others.

9. To challenge college students to consider vocations relating to the needs of our urban centers.

Parents in the Minneapolis program noted an improvement in school attitudes and achievement of their children. Most parents with younger children not involved in the project wanted them to have the same opportunity to be with a volunteer.

Federal programs, such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, are encouraging innovative solutions to educational problems of disadvantaged children. One of the major problems has been the lack of available personnel as personnel have been defined traditionally. Redefining educational personnel to include paraprofessionals and persons with no qualifications other than interest and a desire to help opens a new realm of possibilities for more effective educational programs.

> ...we owe it to our teachers, and their pupils, to make the best possible use of teacher talent, through training, through the use of subprofessional or volunteer helpers, and through the wise use of available community resources (10).
>
> John F. Hughes, Director
> Division of Compensatory Education
> Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education
> U.S. Office of Education

> Implementation of the [school volunteer] program has resulted in a new means for effective, two-way communication between community's professional educational staff and its citizens, a communication which has resulted in a greater understanding and acceptance of sound educational programs (11).
>
> Jack P. Crowther
> Superintendent of Schools
> Los Angeles City Schools

REFERENCES

1. How to Organize a School Volunteer Program in Individual Schools and Suggested Volunteer Aids. Los Angeles City Schools, California, 1968, pp. 26-7 (ED 036 463).

2. Ibid., p. v.

3. Shalen, Marcia, The School Volunteer Program. New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, 1966, p. 4 (ED 010 743).

4. Ibid., pp. 6-16.

5. Provus, Malcolm et al., Staffing for Better Schools (Under Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C., Division of Compensatory Education, 1967, p. 22 (ED 034 717).

6. Ibid., p. 26.

7. How to Organize a School Volunteer Program..., op cit., p. 21.

8. Provus et al., op. cit., p. 25.

9. Murton, Bonnie J. et al., Project Motivation 1964-1965. Community Health and Welfare Council of Hennepin County, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, Youth Development Project, March 1966, p. 8 (ED 012 717).

10. Provus et al., op. cit., p. iii.

11. How to Organize a School Volunteer Program..., op. cit., p. ii.